

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of the claims will replace the previous version, and the listing of the claims:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1-4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) A self-tapping screw fastener comprising:

a first rod having a hole with an inner peripheral surface therein, and

a second rod screwed into and fastened to the first rod, said second rod including a threaded shaft having an external thread to operate as a tapping screw for tapping an internal thread in the inner peripheral surface to thereby be fastened to the first rod, and a smooth guide shaft projecting from an end of the threaded shaft coaxially therewith, said smooth guide shaft having an outer diameter smaller than an outer diameter of the external thread and larger than an inner diameter of the external thread and an inner diameter of the internal thread to form an annular step at a connecting portion between the smooth guide shaft and the threaded shaft, said annular step contacting a ridge of the internal thread adjacent thereto to prevent the second rod from being rotated in an unscrewed direction relative to the first rod,

wherein said annular step forms a small diameter portion around the second rod between the smooth guide shaft and a part of the external thread adjacent thereto, and said second rod including the threaded shaft and the smooth guide shaft with the annular step is integrally formed together by one member.

6. (previously presented) A push rod according to claim 5, wherein said internal thread is formed in the inner peripheral surface by squeezing the inner peripheral surface into roots of the external

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